

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BOGOTA 05509 01 OF 02 141828Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ARAE-00 A-01 NSC-05 SS-15 SSO-00
PA-01 PRS-01 USIE-00 DHA-02 SNM-02 DEAE-00 /042 W
-----141848Z 066194 /43

O R 141722Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2061
WHITE HOUSE WASHDC IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY KINGSTON
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BOGOTA 5509

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP, CO (MRS. ROSALYNN CARTER)
SUBJ: MRS. CARTER'S VISIT TO COLOMBIA, JUNE 9-10

1. SUMMARY. MRS. CARTER'S 23-HOUR VISIT TO COLOMBIA
SUCCESSFULLY ACHIEVED ITS SEVERAL OBJECTIVES OF DEMONSTRATING
US AFFINITY FOR ONE OF THE FEW REMAINING LATIN AMERICAN DEMO-
CRACIES, ENHANCING GOOD BILATERAL RELATIONS, AND AT THE SAME
TIME RAISING WITH PRESIDENT LOPEZ A NUMBER OF SUBSTANTATIVE
ISSUES OF HIGH PRIORITY TO THE US. END SUMMARY.

2. THE GOC DURING THE PLANNING STAGE AT FIRST TENDED
TO DOWNGRADE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE VISIT. THIS TENDENCY
WAS GRADUALLY OVERCOME AS REPORTS ARRIVED OF MRS. CARTER'S
HIGH-LEVEL RECEPTION AT PREVIOUS STOPS. ANOTHER PROBLEM
WAS THE TIMING OF THE VISIT. JUNE 9 IS A RELIGIOUS HOLI-
DAY, CORPUS CHRISTI. FALLING AS IT DID ON THURSDAY,
THE COLOMBIANS, AS IS THEIR CUSTOM, CONVERTED IT INTO A
4-DAY WEEKEND.

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PAGE 02 BOGOTA 05509 01 OF 02 141828Z

3. THE DATE HAS A MORE SINISTER SIGNIFICANCE. JUNE 8
AND 9 ARE THE ANNIVERSARIES OF DISTURBANCES IN PAST YEARS
DURING WHICH STUDENTS WERE KILLED AND ARE TRADITIONALLY
OBSERVED BY LEFT-WING DEMONSTRATIONS. THIS CAUSED GOC
AUTHORITIES TO PROVIDE EVEN HEAVIER SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS
THAN WOULD HAVE BEEN OCCASIONED SOLELY BY MRS. CARTER'S

VISIT. IN THE EVENT, THE VISIT WAS SINGULARLY FREE OF DISTURBANCES OR DEMONSTRATIONS AGAINST HER, AND ONLY ONE SMALL, BRIEF AND ORDERLY DEMONSTRATION FAR FROM MRS. CARTER'S ROUTE COMMEMORATED THE ANNIVERSARY.

4. IN HER ARRIVAL REMARKS, AND STATEMENTS TO THE PRESS, MRS. CARTER EMPHASIZED US RECOGNITION AND SUPPORT OF COLOMBIA'S DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS AND EXCELLENT HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD. THIS WAS WARMLY APPRECIATED BY OFFICIAL AND PRIVATE COLOMBIANS AND BY THE MEDIA.

5. THE HIGHLIGHT OF MRS. CARTER'S VISIT WAS HER MEETING WITH PRESIDENT LOPEZ AND FOREIGN MINISTER LIEVANO, WHICH RAN ABOUT 30 MINUTES OVER THE SCHEDULED ONE HOUR. MRS. CARTER OUTLINED PRESIDENT CARTER'S VIEWS ON WORLD POLITICS AND HIS OUTLOOK TOWARDS LATIN AMERICA. SHE THEN RAISED A NUMBER OF SPECIFIC ISSUES OF INTEREST TO THE US: HUMAN RIGHTS, NON-PROLIFERATION, THE PANAMA CANAL, AMERICAN PRISONERS HELD FOR LONG PRE-TRIAL PERIODS, AND KIDNAPPED PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEER RICHARD STARR. PRESIDENT LOPEZ'S RESPONSES WERE POSITIVE AND HELPFUL. MRS. CARTER BORE DOWN MOST HEAVILY ON THE USG'S CONCERN OVER DRUG ABUSE IN THE US. ITS CORRUPTING INFLUENCE ON THE GOC, AND IN PARTICULAR, THAT CORRUPTION'S IMPACT ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE GOC'S ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM. LOPEZ AGREED WITH THESE CONCERNS BUT COUNTERED THAT THE GOC NEEDED MORE AND BETTER EQUIPMENT, WHICH HAD BEEN PROMISED BY THE USG AND WAS STILL PENDING. ASKED BY MRS. CARTER IF HE HAD ANY MESSAGES HE WISHED HER TO CONVEY TO PRESIDENT
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PAGE 03 BOGOTA 05509 01 OF 02 141828Z

CARTER, PRESIDENT LOPEZ RAISED THE ISSUE OF TRADE PREFERENCES AND TARIFFS, AND CONCERN OVER PROBLEMS WHICH WOULD RESULT FROM AN ANTICIPATED DROP IN COFFEE PRICES. (SEPTEL).

6. PRESS, RADIO, AND TV GAVE BLANKET COVERAGE TO MRS. CARTER'S BOGOTA VISIT AND STRESSED BOTH ITS GOOD-WILL ASPECTS AND THE FACT THAT SHE WAS ARRIVING AS THE PRESIDENT'S PERSONAL EMISSARY TO DISCUSS MATTERS OF SUBSTANCE. ALL MAJOR PAPERS AND MAGAZINES CARRIED PRE-VISIT STORIES ON HER LIFE, PERSONALITY, AND ROLE IN THE POLITICAL LIFE OF PRESIDENT CARTER. TV AND RADIO NEWSCASTS GAVE AMPLE AND UPBEAT PRE-ARRIVAL NEWS COVERAGE TO THE SHOLE L.A. VISIT. THE BOGOTA VISIT PLAYED AS THE LEAD STORY JUNE 9 THROUGH 11, WITH THE LOCAL PRESS GIVING FAVORABLE PLAY TO MRS. CARTER'S CANDID AND NATURAL STYLE AND WARMTH DEMONSTRATED IN PUBLIC MEETINGS. WHILE COLOMBIA'S LEADING NEWSPAPER EL TIEMPO EXPRESSED SOME SKEPTICISM PRECEDING HER ARRIVAL, (CALLING THE VISIT "INTERESTING" AND STATING

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PAGE 01 BOGOTA 05509 02 OF 02 141833Z
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O R 141722Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2062
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BOGOTA 5509

THAT "IT IS POSSIBLE THAT SHE WILL DO HER DIFFICULT JOB WELL"), THE PAPER WARMED TO MRS. CARTER'S VISIT UPON HER ARRIVAL AND CALLED HER A "WONDERFUL AMBASSADOR,... WELL CUT OUT FOR DIPLOMACY." THE LIBERAL PAPER EL ESPECTADOR GAVE A WARM WELCOME TO MRS. CARTER BUT EXPRESSED THE OFT-REPEATED DESIRE THAT THE VISIT WOULD RESULT IN A "CHANGE FROM OPTIMISTIC THEORY TO REALITY" IN US--L.A. RELATIONS. CONSERVATIVE PAPERS, CRITICAL OF THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION SINCE THE ELECTION, GAVE LESS SPACE TO COVERAGE OF THE VISIT, BUT ECHOED THE POSITIVE TONE OF THE LIBERAL PAPERS IN NEWS STORIES. CONSERVATIVE EDITORIAL PAGES GAVE HER A COOL WELCOME, QUESTIONING WHETHER THE VISIT WAS COSMETIC OR SUBSTANTATIVE, AND USING THE VISIT AS A PEG TO CRITICIZE WARMING US-CUBAN RELATIONS.

7. IN SUM, MRS. CARTER'S BRIEF STAY AMONG THE COLOMBIANS AND HER DIRECT, UNPRETENTIOUS AND UNCOMPLICATED STYLE CAPTURED THE HEARTS AND THE IMAGINATIONS OF COLOMBIANS,
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PAGE 02 BOGOTA 05509 02 OF 02 141833Z

TO JUDGE FROM PRIVATE OFFICIAL AND MAN-IN-THE-STREET COMMENT, AS WELL AS MEDIA REACTION. IN THIS, SHE CAPITALIZED ON A GENERALLY FRIENDLY ATTITUDE TOWARD THE US AT ALL LEVELS, A HISTORICALLY STRONG PREFERENCE IN COLOMBIA FOR DEMOCRATIC ADMINISTRATIONS, AND THE HIGH EXPECTATIONS AND FAVORABLE RESPONSE WHICH THE ELECTION OF PRESIDENT CARTER HAS AWAKENED IN COLOMBIA. AT THE SAME TIME, MRS. CARTER BROUGHT TO THE PERSONAL AWARENESS OF PRESIDENT LOPEZ THE USG'S VIEWS ON A NUMBER OF ISSUES OF INTEREST TO THE US. SHE WAS ESPECIALLY EFFECTIVE IN THE MANNER IN WHICH SHE RAISED WITH LOPEZ AND LIEVANO, FIRMLY AND FORECFULLY, THE USG'S CONCERN OVER CORRUPTION IN THE GOC WITH REGARD TO COLOMBIAN NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT ACTION, WHILE NOT OFFENDING THE THIN-SKINNED LOPEZ'S SENSIBILITIES, WHICH COULD WELL HAVE CAUSED A CURTAILMENT IN GOC COOPERATION IN NARCOTICS INTERDICTION WITH USG AGENCIES.
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